



Log Home Research FAQs

by Roland Sweet, Editor, Log Homes Illustrated

How much of a hassle is it if I live in Pennsylvania and want to build my log home in California but buy it from a company in Michigan?

This happens every day, especially since so many log-home companies have national dealer networks. The key to making this arrangement work is having a builder you can trust on site.

Do companies charge extra to ship logs? Even short distances?

Some companies charge extra for shipping, even down the street. Others include the cost of shipping in the package price. It isn't unusual for companies to charge a flat fee for shipping (either listed as such or not identified) regardless of where the package is being shipped. That way, someone whose log package is shipped 20 miles pays the same as someone whose home is shipped 2,000 miles.

Do some communities ban log homes? Are there communities with nothing but log homes?

Yes in both cases. Log-home resorts and developments have become increasingly popular in certain parts of the country. Other developments may permit a variety of rustic-style homes, including log ones. In these exclusive communities, plans invariably must be submitted to and approved by an architectural review committee.

What's involved in adding on to a log home?

Basically, design sensitivity so that the addition will harmonize with the original building and experience to make sure the addition will wind up even with the original part after the new logs have settled.

What is the difference between log homes with chinking and ones without it?

Chinking often indicates a hand-crafted log home since that type of material used between log courses was the traditional method of sealing during the early stages of log-home development. Nowadays, other materials can perform the sealing function, leaving chinking as more of an aesthetic choice. It can be applied to handcrafted or machined log homes.

Where can I find design ideas specifically for log homes?

The log-home magazines feature floor plans and photos of finished homes to inspire designs. Also, look on the internet and specifically at www.loghomes.org.

Do log-home companies hold seminars or workshops that I can attend to learn how their homes are built?

Many do. Call or visit the websites of companies you're interested in, or check the events calendars in the log home magazines.

Is there any software for my home computer that will help me design my own log home?

3-D Home Architect is a cost-effective, although somewhat limited, software program that can help novices with floor plans.

If all I need to build a log home is logs, why can't I just go to any sawmill and buy them?

The structural integrity of a log home depends on much more than just the logs. Any sawmill can provide the raw material, but you would be responsible for seeing that the logs and other materials met the engineering requirements of such a structure.

If I decide to build my log-home myself, what kind of technical support can I expect from the company?

Each company has its own policy. Some include the cost of technical assistance in their package price; others break it out separately. Some companies provide on-site help; others give the information by phone. Most technical questions are answered in a company's construction manual.

If I don't like the color of my logs, can I paint them?

You can stain logs, but never paint them. Logs must be allowed to breathe so that moisture isn't trapped inside.

What kind of roof goes best with log homes?

Any type of roof can go with a log home, from standard asphalt shingles to cedar shakes and metal. Aesthetics and cost dictate the decision of material.

Is there any way to build a log home so it looks like one on the outside but not so much on the inside?

Some people are delighted to discover that they can use drywall in log homes, particularly for partition walls. Since log homes often are built using log construction only for the main level, second stories are conventionally framed. The same is true with finished basements.
